


**IT HAPPENED
IN CAIRO**

ARRANGED BY ANNE WEST

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

Effie A. Lonsden

April 1940



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Happened
In
Cairo



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Anne West

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FOREWORD

The girlhood diary of Maud Rittenhouse, a Cairo (Ill.) belle of the 1880's, was published last fall. Almost overnight Cairo found itself in a literary spotlight. Readers by the dozens . . . and then by the hundreds . . . began to ask questions. "Where is Maud now?" they wanted to know. "Is the old Rittenhouse home still standing?" . . . "What ever happened to all those interesting people with whom the affairs of her daily life were so intimately woven?"

The older citizens of Cairo read the Journal and started recollecting . . . "Why, I remember her . . . or that." The younger generation exclaimed, "I've heard grandmother tell about that dance . . . that celebration . . . what happened after he left town . . . she had a picture of him in the attic." But simple recollections are often shadowy. The readers of *Maud* wanted definite information.

This short book pretends to be only what it is: an attempt to answer some of those questions

with facts, a supplementary fund of information concerning the post-Journal lives of some of Maud's friends and admirers—and of her Cairo itself. Common hearsay has played no part in the compilation of this information. The source in every important instance has been recorded newspaper fact.

If the interested readers of *Maud* find their answers here . . . if Cairoites find an unpretentious record for their shelves . . . if ex-Cairoites, now scattered throughout the country, find their nostalgic gropings into memory satisfied . . . this shuffling of musty, yellowed papers will have served its purpose.

A. W.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

MARCH 1, 1940.

“Here was the breeding place not of disease, but of heroes, the best people that ever trod the face of the earth. The country that Dickens so bitterly assailed is now one of the most fertile and productive agricultural territories in all the world, and the dwellers here represent a higher average of comfort and intelligence than the people of any tract of like extent on this continent.”

—PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
In an address at Cairo
on Oct. 3, 1907.

Chapter I

THEN AND NOW

Excitement reached fever-pitch in Cairo on Oct. 3, 1907. For on that mild autumn day the Steamer *Mississippi* pulled up at the riverfront with President Theodore Roosevelt aboard. A booming of 21 guns from the Danville battery heralded his arrival, and a fleet of more than a dozen famous river steamboats hung beside as a convoy. Aboard were 23 governors, a good half a hundred congressmen, and the members of the Inland Waterways Commission. Almost the whole town had moved out on the Ohio levee for a welcome.

When the giant parade was formed, however, the citizenry tagged right back in and beat its gala way to the speaking in the park. There "Teddy" addressed the thousands with words of praise that helped blot out the ugly picture Charles Dickens had penned 65 years earlier in his *American Notes*.

Cairo had come a long way since 1842. She has come a longer way since 1907. The same two rivers hug her banks today that hugged them when Maud dashed purple ink across the pages of her diary in the 1880's. But the area between the banks has grown up—become a lady—even as did Maud.

In the dying decades of the nineteenth century the river traffic at Cairo was heavy, with ten or more packets arriving and departing daily. These fine river steamers usually ran between Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New Orleans. The levee was stamping ground for merchants, showboat folks, travelers, roustabouts and steamboatmen.

It was only natural that Edna Ferber should go there for much of the material she was to use in *Showboat*, ride on the Steamboat *Kiwanis* with Capt. J. S. Hacker (who, at 87, lives graciously on Washington Avenue as the "dean" of Cairo's river men), and draw her characterization of "Hard Harry" from one Harry Schumaker, captain of the *Three States*.

In 1940 those days are a colorful memory. The struggle between rail and water at the junction of the rivers was as dramatic as it was long. The railroads won . . . to the extent that the double-decked steamboats are gone. But the water

still pleads its case too, for stubborn tugs push long steel barges up and down the riverfront, and Cairo still maintains its position as the year-around head of navigation on the two rivers. Three barge line companies maintain terminals, and more than 600,000 tons of freight are transferred annually between barge and boxcar.

In turn, the town has bid goodby to the ferry-boats . . . as picturesque in their way as the big packets. Ferry service across the Mississippi to Missouri was interrupted in 1929 by the completion of the Mississippi River Highway Bridge. Nov. 11, 1938, the opening date of its sister bridge across the Ohio to Kentucky, marked the end of the historical ferry service between these two states. Today only a sentimental sightseer would ask for ferry accommodations across the rivers.

Then, as now, Cairo boasted of many railroads. It was the southern terminus of the New York Central and the Cairo and Thebes road. The Illinois Central and the Mobile & Ohio passed through, crossing the Ohio on the Illinois Central Railroad Bridge (the one responsible for bringing Earl Mayne to Cairo) which was finished in 1889. At that time it was the longest metallic structure across a river anywhere in the world. With

10,556 feet of steel spans, its total length (including approaches) reached 20,461 feet or 3.875 miles. Entering Cairo also were the "Iron Mountain" and the "Cotton Belt." These two roads had their cars ferried across the Mississippi from Missouri.

There were two large flour mills, several grain elevators, and many lumber mills. Between its own industries and the river and rail traffic, Cairo was a lively place. Ohio Street, the street running parallel with the Ohio river, was the scene of greatest activity. For here were located many wholesale produce and commission houses, saloons, cafes and second rate hotels. At one end of the street was the Illinois Central Railroad depot. Trains arrived on both the Illinois Central and the Mobile & Ohio at the noon hour. Passengers alighting from these trains were invariably greeted with dinner bells and gongs, and above the din could be heard the voices of negro barkers ballyhooing for their particular cafes. The old darky at the "Blue Front" usually shouted, "Best meals in the city only 25c—nice place to wash and brush up." A few doors away was the "K. C.," where meals were also "the best in the city at only 15c." Today these places are all gone. The commercial life of the city has moved back a street

to Commercial Avenue. The Illinois Central depot now stands at North Cairo (with bus service from the downtown district). Only the historic old Halliday House (once the St. Charles hotel) stands its same ground on the riverfront.

On Sept. 27, 1881, Maud wrote of missing the grand reception at the opening of Halliday House because she was without escort for the evening. Today the Halliday, still in operation, is a "must" on every Southern Illinois tourist's list. He may wander into "Grant's Bar" and have a drink at the same spot where Gen. Ulysses S. Grant stood and drank in the Civil War days when the Halliday was his headquarters. He may go up to Room 215 where the furniture presumes to be as it was when Grant put his key in the lock each night. Or he may descend to the dungeons where, guides will tell him, runaway slaves were hidden and Confederate soldiers held captive during the 60's. One of the most popular theatre managers in New York City today was in his youth a bellhop at the Halliday when it wore the name "St. Charles."

The business and the flavor which the river activity brought to Cairo made the place known far and near as a hustling, wide-awake, wide-open town. While Maud and her mother were working so hard for the W. C. T. U., Cairo enjoyed the

questionable distinction of having over 50 saloons within its confines. When a new one opened it is said that the owner threw the key in the river or the gutter and that after that the door was never locked.

Each saloon paid a license fee of \$1,000 a year, and when funds were sought for churches or civic projects the solicitors always called upon the saloon keepers first, as their donations could be counted on to be most generous. Uncle Joe Steagala was usually called upon to head such lists as his donations were always exceptionally large. Uncle Joe ran two saloons—one, "Uncle Joe's"; the other, "The Glad Hand," later called "My Brother's Place."

Another organization to which charity looked regularly for help was the K. M. K. C. (Knights of the Mystic Krew of Comus). This organization was the ingenious invention of a group of Cairo men, and presumably existed nowhere else in the world. The aim was purely that of pleasurable relaxation, and the pleasure of the members never reached greater heights than on those nights when they initiated a new member.

Although a Cairo man might suspect that he had been singled out as a prospective member, he never knew just when the Knights might claim

him. On nights when they decided to initiate, the men garbed themselves in long white robes and hoods (similar to those of the Ku Klux Klan), each hood being decorated with skull and crossbones. Thus attired, they set out to march the streets until they found their man—in bed at home, or over the card table at a saloon. The front men in the line of march led a goat; the middle section clanked along with blindfold, handcuffs, and a long heavy chain; the end man beat a sullen boom-boom-boom on a drum. Citizens, roused from their slumber, would turn over and murmur, “The K. M. K. C.’s are on the march tonight.”

The K. M. K. C. hall was only a half block away from Hank Goettel’s saloon, which stood next to the site of the present Rodgers theatre on Eighth Street. Behind Goettel’s was a beer garden. After the initiate had been taken to the hall and put through a strenuous initiation, he was placed, still with blindfold, in a basket with wheels which ran down a tight wire from the upstairs hall window to the beer garden a half block away. With their man securely fastened, the members beat a retreat to the garden, released the hold on the basket, and were on hand to welcome the gentleman when he rode a rapid descent to their feet. When the blindfold was

removed he found a fancy "spread" waiting to be devoured.

The K. M. K. C. is only a memory now, but a decidedly bold one. And many of the former members are still on hand to tell brisk stories of the nights when they went "on the march." Undoubtedly many of Maud's friends belonged to the organization.

Another hardy group of early Cairoites was made up of the volunteer fire fighters, who pitted their strength and that of hand pumps against the city's blazes. There were five competitive companies in the 1880's—the Arab, the Rough and Ready, the Delta, the Hibernian, and the Anchor. When a fire broke out the custom was to ring a bell in the tower of these companies and so call the fighters forth to action. On New Year's Eve these bells were always used by merrymakers to join the whistles of the riverboats and tugs in welcoming the New Year.

In the early 1890's the New Year was ushered in with zero weather and the streets were deserted at midnight. When the bells and whistles started their usual din the natives, including the volunteer firemen, were in bed trying to sleep. Bells rang and whistles blew for fully one hour. The people grumbled and turned over. Next morning

they learned that precisely at midnight fire had started in Aaron Stiefel's European Hotel on the Ohio levee. Beside it had been the City National Bank building. These, with several smaller structures, lay in blackened ruins. The following New Year's Eve a ban was placed on the ringing of fire bells for celebration purposes.

In 1893 a municipal fire department replaced the volunteer companies, and today Cairo is protected by several up-to-date stations fully manned by paid firemen. In 1938, when a long parade was a part of the Ohio River Highway Bridge dedication, members of the local fire department dug up what remained of two of the old hand pumpers (stored for nearly fifty years in an ancient Cairo warehouse) and put them in working order for a float.

Two electric railways, one of which Maud writes about in her Journal, were put in operation on the Cairo streets in 1892. Wood Rittenhouse (Maud's brother) helped build the power plant for one of these railways. The cars on one of the roads were unusually long. Consequently, there was considerable trouble in rounding curves. Often the cars ran off the track, and usually they were placed back on the rails by a gang of boys. The present general manager of one of

New York's subway systems got his first railroad experience in Cairo as a member of one of these gangs. A little more than 40 years later, on the last night of the year 1933, the last car made its final run. The rails have been removed in recent years and modern busses put into service.

Fire, water, and fever have plagued Cairo's history. But water has been the most persistent. In February, 1882, Maud writes of floods along the rivers, and again in 1883 she records that the Ohio stood at 52 feet 3 inches on the gauge. Both after and during these flood periods most of the streets in Cairo would be covered with sipe (pronounced "seep") water. At one time Maud claims to have taken a skiff ride from the Halliday House at the south end of Ohio Street to Thirty-fourth Street on the north fringes of town. This is disputed by several of the older residents at the present time, who claim that the ride would have been impossible unless she went over the levee and rode upon the rivers themselves.

That part of town which Maud describes as "Lake Edwards" (the scene of many a moonlight skiff ride in those days) was a low area of approximately 24 blocks which filled annually with sipe water. In 1906 sand, silt and mud

was pumped from the bed of the Mississippi River to fill the area. But the machinery broke down and, as the enterprise was a private one, other low areas in town remained unfilled. Later the city installed pumps with which to drive out the water. Today there are five pumping stations in the town, capable of taking hundreds of thousands of gallons of water from the city in an hour.

From year to year the levees were raised until today Cairo is protected by a stone and concrete seawall which rises 60 feet above the river bed and is said to be the strongest seawall in the world. The wall itself is a series of 10-foot square concrete boxes filled with tamped earth. The base width of 16 feet narrows to ten at the top, allowing sufficient footage for men to construct additional height in times of flood. This great seawall extends from its junction point with the earthwork of the M. & O. levee, south of the city, northward to Thirty-second Street where it joins the earth levee system which completely rings the city of Cairo and the Cairo Drainage District. Some 6500 acres of land lie within this system, 1500 of these being within the Cairo city limits. Added protection is given this lesser area by a secondary levee system (likewise 60 feet in

height)—a ring within a ring. The main highway north from town can be cut like a ribbon by the lowering of massive flood gates under the approach to the Illinois Central Railroad Bridge. In the early months of 1937, when Cincinnati, Louisville, Evansville—cities all up and down the Ohio Valley—fell victims to the flood—when water reached the second stories of buildings in Paducah, Ky., only 35 miles away—when the Ohio swished against the top inches of the great seawall—Cairo sat dry behind her levee system, the only town in the lower Ohio Valley to escape. No floodwater has ever topped Cairo's levees. As this is being written the Ohio stands at seven feet six inches.

Cairo's latest triumph over odds was the completion of the Ohio River Highway Bridge in the fall of 1938. Just 50 feet from its approach is the approach to the Mississippi River Highway Bridge, completed in 1929. With its \$14,000,000 worth of bridges, its intricate levee system, and its network of highways and railroads, Cairo has made giant strides forward . . . from then . . . to now. The modern Cairo is Maud's Cairo—re-styled for 1940.

Chapter II

“LAUNCHED UPON LIFE’S UNCERTAIN SEA”

To Maud her high school graduation was a mingled sensation of triumph and sorrow. She’d earned her diploma—and lost her carefree school days.

The Cairo *Bulletin* for Saturday, June 10, 1882, had this to say about the exercises.

THE NINTH COMMENCEMENT

As a matter of news for the Cairo public an extensive account of the graduation exercises of the Cairo High School Class of '82 held at the Opera House yesterday afternoon is almost unnecessary, because people from the farthest ends of the city were present to witness it. The Opera House stage represented a suite of drawing rooms, surrounded by a collonnade supporting an elaborate entablature. There were eight groups of columns, and against each group was suspended a large star with tips of evergreen and each bearing in the centre the name of the graduates. The stars were cut from

thick cardboard, and inscriptions, surrounded by ferns and foliage, were produced by spatter work with such perfect shading that every figure could be distinctly seen from all parts of the house. Miss Bettie Korsmeyer did the work and proved herself an artist of much taste and skill. A piano and an organ and a number of chairs placed in rows in a semicircle completed the stage outfit.

Over a thousand people all in holiday attire were present, and gazing down upon the myriads of beautiful hats and bright fluttering fans in the parquette and parquette circle one imagined that he saw before him a sea of nature's own flowers waving to and fro in the gentle zephyrs.

The audience gathered early and throughout the exercises gave deep interest and appreciation. The Choral Society which was to take part was on the stage in full force, the school board and Prof. Bigley were also there, the latter directing the exercises.

A handsomer, more self-possessed and more intelligent looking group of young ladies probably never — well — hardly ever “roamed wide the realms of thought together,” or was ever launched upon life's uncertain sea by any institution of learning in the country.

The order of the exercises was as follows:
Piano Solo—Miss Ada Scarrett.

Salutatory and Essay—Individuality—Miss Edith Martin.

Essay — Does Education Promote Happiness?—Miss Sarah Wheeler.

Essay—Women of the Past and Present Ages—Miss Amanda Field.

Music — Choral Society — Accompanied on the organ and piano by Miss Ella Robbins and Ada V. Scarrett.

Essay—Monuments—Miss Jennie Wright.

Essay — Spirit of Discovery — Miss Emma Webster.

Essay—Poetical vs. Practical—Miss Martha Martin.

Essay—Character Study—Miss Maud Ritzenhouse.

Essay and Valedictory—By Ceaseless Action All Is Subsists—Miss Eva Shepard.

Music—Choral Society.

From the Opera House the eight graduates went directly to the residence of the parents of Miss Edith Martin where they spent the afternoon and night in a delightful manner.

(As events turned out in the passing years, it would seem that Maud knew little of the subject she chose for her graduation essay.)

Of the girls in Maud's class, it is known only that Eva Shepard is now living in Chicago, and that Edith Martin (Maud's cousin De-de), who was married to Mr. E. E. (Eugene) Ellis, the

Cairo printer, on May 16, 1883, was killed in a horse and buggy accident at Villa Ridge, Ill. Mr. Ellis had become the publisher of the Cairo *Telegram*, an evening daily. The *Telegram* ceased publication many years ago and Mr. Ellis moved to Chicago and entered the printing business. He died there about two years ago.

Not quite ten years after her graduation Maud was to experience a second great triumph. The Cairo *Citizen* of January 28, 1892, carried this story.

MISS MAUD RITTENHOUSE GETS \$1000 FOR A STORY

There was great rejoicing at the Rittenhouse residence last Monday which soon spread among her friends when news went forth that Miss Maud Rittenhouse had captured the first prize of \$1000 offered for a story by an Eastern Company.

The offer was made by the Linville Improvement Company of Mitchell County, North Carolina, for the best story with a description of "Greatfather Mountain," a famous elevation in that vicinity, and scenery, climate and advantages of that locality woven into it.

Competent judges performed the task of examining a vast number of manuscripts which such a liberal offer would naturally draw. Miss Rittenhouse's novelette is en-

titled, "In the After-Glow," and is the result of but a few weeks' work on her part. Her ready pen is already winning for her the name of fame which her friends long ago predicted.

Chapter III

THE HOME FOLKS

Four of the seven members of Maud's immediate family are still living. They are Maud herself (Mrs. Earl H. Mayne of Brooklyn), and her brothers, Wood A. of Cairo, Fred M. of St. Petersburg, Fla., and Robin C. of Chicago.

Her mother, Laura Rittenhouse, daughter of Dr. Daniel Arter, a pioneer citizen of Southern Illinois, died in Chicago in July, 1911, and was brought to Villa Ridge, Ill. (only a few miles north of Cairo) for burial. Her brother, Dr. Harry H. Rittenhouse, died at his home in Chicago on January 10, this year.

The most tragic death in the family was that of her father, Wood Rittenhouse, who was drowned along with ten others when the ferryboat *Katherine* capsized during a cyclone at the junction of the two rivers on the morning of May 26, 1896. This occurred less than a year after Maud had married and moved to New York.

Katherine was a little sternwheel boat, built

to tow a showboat and christened *The New Idea*. But Captain J. S. Hacker had converted her into a ferryboat at Mound City and brought her into service just 20 days before the accident. The Captain (in an interview with the writer in 1938) recalled that the sky appeared cloudless when the boat pulled away from the Cairo bank and that the cyclone struck just a few minutes from the time of its appearance. Of the sixteen people aboard, eleven were drowned. The boat did a complete side turn, but the clerk, Captain Hacker and two passengers came up right together on the bottom guard. As soon as they realized what had happened they became conscious of someone moaning back on the stern. Climbing back to investigate, they found the engineer sitting waist-deep in water with a galvanized tub over his head in an effort to keep off the rain and hail that followed in the wake of the cyclone. Until the others put in their appearance he had thought he was the sole survivor.

By this time so much air had got into the seams of the *Katherine* that she began to settle. The heavy machinery weighted one end down, while buoyancy held the other up, and the boat settled three-fourths right side up in forty feet of water, with the one end anchored at the bottom of the

river. Only the jackstaff and a small area around it remained sticking out of the water. The clerk, the engineer, Captain Hacker, and one of the passengers struck out for shore swimming, but the engineer soon turned back to await rescue by a tug which eventually arrived on the scene. Three days after the *Katherine* turned over occurred the famous St. Louis storm which brought disaster to so many people.

The fact that Wood Rittenhouse, together with Charles Gilhofer, another highly esteemed citizen, had been drowned brought a deep sense of loss to Cairo. The following account of the tragedy is taken from the *Cairo Daily Telegram* of Tuesday, May 26, 1896.

ELEVEN HUMAN LIVES LOST

By the Capsizing of the Ferryboat
Katherine This Morning

She Turned Over in the Great Storm

The most horrible disaster in the history of Cairo occurred this morning. Eleven human lives were lost by the capsizing of the ferryboat *Katherine* during a cyclone that this morning swept this vicinity. There were sixteen persons on board at the time and of these eleven were drowned.

List of the dead: Mrs. William Shannon of Bird's Point; Miss Bertha Stanley of Cairo; Miss May Jones of Cairo; Charles Gilhofer of Cairo; Richard L. Thurman of Cairo; Wood Rittenhouse of Cairo; the infant son of Mrs. Shannon; Mrs. Lou Massey, colored, of Villa Ridge; Louis Hall, fireman; Asbury Alexander, deckhand; George Davis, laborer.

Captain Hacker, when asked about the accident, said, "The boat was caught in a twister which blew her all to pieces. Nothing could be done to save her. It was not storming when I left the ferry landing, but in about five minutes it was upon us."

"I was in the pilot house when she went over," said Rankin Posey, the clerk. "I went to the bottom and must have been under 20 feet of water. I followed along the rail under the water until I emerged. I caught hold of Joe Curry and pulled him out. We were on the hull of the boat with the rain and hail beating down upon us. The boat righted itself after we swam ashore."

Captain Marion Wright got the tug Theseus ready to go to the rescue. The tug with a barge got away shortly after 9 o'clock. Among those on board were States Attorney Butler, Hon. Reed Green, Harry Candee, Pierce Walsh, George Burgess, Peter Lind, and a young son of Wood Rittenhouse. States Attorney Butler (the William N. Butler

whom Maud includes in her list of admirers) had thoughtfully purchased a quart of whisky and the survivors, who were completely exhausted, were given draughts from the bottle. Captain Hacker was out in a skiff endeavoring to find the bodies when the tug reached the scene.

Wood Rittenhouse was one of the oldest and best known residents of the city. He was manager of the Three States Ferry Company. Mr. Rittenhouse was born in Ohio in 1835 and came to Cairo in 1858. He was engaged in the flour and commission business located on Ohio levee. He was for several years president of the Cairo Board of Trade. In 1863 he married Miss Laura Arter, daughter of Dr. Arter. She survives with five children, four sons and one daughter, Mrs. Maud Mayne, wife of Dr. Mayne of Brooklyn.

(The *Katherine* was later raised, put back in service, and operated for eight years.)

Dr. Harry H. Rittenhouse was the brother who studied medicine in New York at the same time as Earl Mayne. This account of his death is taken from the Cairo *Evening Citizen* of January 11, 1940.

Old friends in Cairo of Dr. Harry H. Rittenhouse, a former Cairoite, will regret to

learn of his death in Chicago, following an illness of more than eight years.

A letter from Robin Rittenhouse of Chicago, brother of the deceased, to his brother Wood A. of Cairo, states that Dr. Harry passed away at 3:15 a. m., Wednesday, January 10.

The high esteem in which the deceased was held by members of his family, is found in these few words in the letter: "A better man never lived. His example is a power and strength for his family."

Dr. Rittenhouse was born in Cairo in 1868, being the son of Wood Rittenhouse, Sr., and Laura Arter Rittenhouse, old residents of Cairo, coming to this city in 1858, the latter being the daughter of Dr. Daniel Arter, a pioneer citizen of Southern Illinois.

Dr. Harry, as he was affectionately known, graduated from Cairo high school in the class of 1888. He received his medical education in New York and Chicago, where he began the practice of medicine on what was known as "Rosalie Court" in Hyde Park (Chicago).

He was married in Cairo to Liliias Y. Wood, daughter of Col. and Mrs. John Wood, on April 30, 1901. They have resided on Rosalie Court ever since their marriage, and it was in this home that Dr. Rittenhouse passed away.

During the years of his failing health he has had the constant devoted care of his wife and family.

Dr. Rittenhouse is survived by his wife, his three sons, John Wood, Harry Jr., and Gordon, and a number of grandchildren. He also leaves a sister, Mrs. Earl H. Mayne (Maud Rittenhouse), three brothers, Wood A. of Cairo, Fred M. of St. Petersburg, Fla., and Robin C. of Chicago.

Funeral services, which were private, were held this afternoon and the interment was in Mount Hope cemetery.

Dr. Rittenhouse was of a fine character, courteous, kind, friendly and successful in his profession, being finely adapted to this calling. He was a devoted husband and father, the head of a household marked by kindness, consideration and hospitality. Their home was one at which the old friends from Cairo often gathered for social times.

Chapter IV

TO THE STRAINS OF LOHENGRIN

Maud might almost have earned the title of professional bridesmaid, so often was she pressed into service at the marriage of a friend. In the first year following graduation, Jennie Wright and Edith Martin (both classmates of Maud's) tripped to the altar. And after that there was a long procession of them, with Maud generally figuring somewhere in the bridal party.

On the night of Sept. 30, 1889, she records crying about the perplexities of her new school teaching position while waiting for the carriage to come. Undoubtedly the carriage was to take her to the wedding of Miss Jennie Schutter and Mr. F. W. Korsmeyer. For the *Cairo Citizen* of Thursday, Oct. 3, 1889, carried this item in its society news.

A marriage in high social circles occurred last Monday night at the Episcopal church. The contracting parties were Miss Jennie Schutter, daughter of W. H. Schutter, and Mr. F. W. Korsmeyer, the wholesale tobacconist. The church was tastefully decorated with flowers and floral designs for the occasion and, long before the appointed time, was filled to overflowing with invited

guests. At 8 o'clock the strains of the wedding march announced the arrival of the wedding party, composed of the bride and her sister, Miss Lily Schutter, Miss Mary Irvin and Mr. Julius Schuh, Miss Maud Rittenhouse and Mr. Carl Leich, and Miss Bessie Korsmeyer and Mr. L. H. Butts. They proceeded up the aisle to the altar, where they were met by the groom and his brother, Mr. Alex Korsmeyer. After the usual impressive Episcopal ceremony by Rector Davenport, the party retired to the home of the bride's parents, where they received the congratulations of their friends. They left via the Mobile & Ohio at 11 o'clock for a wedding tour of the larger cities, and will return on the 15th.

F. W. (Will) Korsmeyer was one of the members of the Ideal League and often took part with Maud in amateur theatricals. After residing in Cairo for several years following their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Korsmeyer left for Colorado Springs, where Will successfully operated a drug store until the time of his death in 1922. Mrs. Korsmeyer now lives in New York with her daughter.

Bessie Korsmeyer and H. L. Butts, listed as attendants at the Schutter-Korsmeyer wedding, had Maud as a bridesmaid at their own nuptials.

less than a year later. The *Cairo Citizen* gave readers this information on June 5, 1890.

The marriage of Mr. H. L. Butts and Miss Bessie Korsmeyer last Thursday evening at the Church of the Redeemer was a brilliant affair. The church had previously been decorated with flowers for the occasion and was filled to overflowing with friends of the bride and groom. At the close of the ceremony a reception was given by the bride's mother, after which Mr. and Mrs. Butts departed on their wedding trip. Upon their return they will commence housekeeping in a cottage erected for them on Eleventh Street.

After a short residence in Cairo Mr. and Mrs. Butts separated, Mrs. Butts taking their only son with her to Colorado to live with her mother. Mr. Butts in the meantime was transferred by the Singer Manufacturing Company from its Cairo plant to Columbus, Ohio. After a separation of several years a reconciliation was arranged and Mrs. Butts left Colorado for Columbus with their son. Enroute, however, the child was stricken with scarlet fever and died two days after reaching Columbus. In a short while the couple separated again, Mrs. Butts returning to Colorado where she now lives. The whereabouts of Mr. Butts is unknown.

One of the fanciest weddings which caused Maud to get all dolled up in bridesmaid's attire was that of Winthrop (Wint) Dunning to C. Fred Galigher. The following account appeared in the *Cairo Citizen* for Thursday, Oct. 15, 1891.

THE UNION OF TWO OF THE FIRST FAMILIES OF CAIRO

To speak of the event as a brilliant one is to mildly describe the wedding of Miss Winthrop Dunning and Mr. C. Fred Galigher at the Church of the Redeemer last evening. The union of two of the oldest families of Cairo put society in a flutter of excitement, and with the arrival of the time of the nuptials came a host of friends to witness the ceremony.

The church never looked prettier than it did last night when the wedding was in progress, and the tasteful floral decorations added much to the scene. Besides the usual hangings upon the chandeliers, the initials of the participants, "G" and "D," made of red and blue incandescent globes upon a field of evergreen, made a pretty effect. Both were lighted before the ceremony, but as the bridal party entered, the "G" faded away, leaving only the "D." And after the knot was tied, the "G" again appeared and the other letter was gone.

The sound of the wedding march was a signal for the entrance of the bridesmaids. Passing out from the vestry, they slowly moved down the aisle and met the maid of honor, Miss Ann Davis, and the bride, leaning upon the arm of her mother.

The party then proceeded to the altar where they met the groom and groomsman, Mr. Joe Jackson, when Rev. Davenport, with the solemn Episcopal marriage ceremony, united the two hearts and lives. The ceremony and the blessing pronounced, carriages were taken to the home of the bride's mother, where several hours were spent, attended by numbers of friends. The bridesmaids were Miss Ann Davis of Keokuk, Ia.; Miss Thompson of Little Rock, Ark.; Miss Boswell of St. Louis; Misses Alice, Lila and Laura Halliday; Mary Irvin; Christine Woodward and Maud Rittenhouse

Mr. and Mrs. Galigher continued to live in Cairo, although their summers were generally spent in northern Michigan. Mrs. Galigher was a leader in the musical life of Cairo, being three times president of the Fortnightly Musical Club and vice president of the State Federation of Musical Clubs. She was organist at the Episcopal church for 24 years. She died in the spring of 1937. Mr. Galigher still resides in Cairo.

Although it isn't recorded in the Journals as published in *Maud*, our heroine served as brides-

maid again only a little more than a month after the Dunning-Galigher wedding. This time it was at the Robbins-Russell nuptials, which were duly sanctioned by the *Cairo Citizen* on Nov. 19, 1891. Maud had just turned 27 a short time before.

'MID CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Occurred the Wedding of Miss Robbins
and Mr. Russell

The most brilliant event ever in Cairo was the wedding of Mr. Andrew Russell of Jacksonville and Miss Clara Robbins of this city last evening at the Church of the Redeemer. On entering the church, the guests were met by Messrs. H. H. Candee and C. W. Henderson who collected the invitation cards. The floral decorations won the admiration of all. It was to be a "white and gold" wedding and all the decorations were of white and gold chrysanthemums. The church was filled long before the time appointed and many of the ladies were in evening costume. As the hour approached, gold and colored ribbons were fastened on each side of the center aisle and a garland of flowers was stretched across it. This was removed at the entrance of the bridal party.

Promptly at 8:30 the organist, Mrs. John S. Aisthorpe, played the opening chorus from the opera *Lohengrin* and the chorus class, composed of about 30 ladies and gentlemen

under the leadership of Mrs. John M. Lansden, sang this beautiful chorus of welcome.

The four ushers—Messrs. Sam Halliday, Harry Halliday, W. P. Halliday, Jr., and Mr. Dixon of Jacksonville—led the way, followed by the Misses Bessie Robbins, Laura Halliday, Maud Rittenhouse, Blanch McKenzie, Vesta Halliday, Mamie Lansden, Nellie Gilbert, Alice Halliday and four Misses Russell, sisters of the groom.

These young ladies all wore beautiful white dresses with gold slippers, and carried bouquets of yellow chrysanthemums.

Next followed the maid of honor, Miss Lila Halliday, who wore a rich costume of yellow silk, and last came the lovely bride upon the arm of her father. She wore an elegant, tasteful gown of heavy white silk combined with white and silver brocade, white tulle veil, and carried white chrysanthemums. At the chancel they were met by the groom, his best man, Mr. David Lansden, and the Rev. F. P. Davenport, who proceeded with the impressive services of the Episcopal church, uniting the happy couple. A reception was given by Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Halliday at their handsome residence from 9:00 to 11:00. Mr. and Mrs. Russell left for Memphis and thence to Jacksonville where they will be at home.

Chapter V

POOR, DARLING ELMER!

When closing the last page of Maud's Journal most readers immediately ask, "Well, what ever became of Elmer—the upright young fellow who could do no wrong in Maud's eyes?"

The answer is EVERYTHING . . . and nothing. But perhaps it would be best to let the yellowed newspaper clippings tell their own story . . .

Old "Judge" A. Comings (Elmer's father), readers will remember, had told Maud that his son was traveling through Europe with one "Thad Cannon." The exact places and times of his various wanderings aren't definite. But it's known that he spent considerable time in South America also, and that while there he married an Englishwoman, a widow with children. The story goes that "Thad Cannon" had also fallen in love with the widow, but that Elmer played the better Dan Cupid and won.

Just what brought him back to Cairo—whether it was curiosity, a decision to face the

music, or longing to see his father who was ill—is questionable. But he DID return. And on March 15, 1894, the *Cairo Citizen* carried the following story.

After an absence of about five years in South America, Elmer Comings returned to Cairo yesterday to answer the charge against him by the New York Store Company for embezzlement and larceny. In the absence of a Circuit Judge, Sheriff Hodges fixed bail at \$1500, which was promptly given by E. E. Comings, E. E. Ellis and Fritz Serbian. He left immediately for Chicago where he is now employed, but will return to plead to his indictment at the May term of the Circuit Court.

On March 24, 1894, Maud wrote of reading a sensational account of Elmer's arrest in a Chicago paper which had been sent to her. The following story appeared on page one of the *Chicago Tribune*, Thursday, March 15, 1894.

CAME BACK TO A CELL
Elmer Comings Arrested
For an Old Crime

Embezzled Eight Thousand Dollars at Cairo, Ill., and Jumped His Bail—Wandered to South America and Married an English-woman with Whom he Traveled in Europe—His Father's Illness Draws Him to his Home, Where He is Recognized—Arrest Follows.

Six years ago Elmer E. Comings embezzled \$8,000 from Charles O. Patier of Cairo, Ill. Monday night he was arrested in this city. Comings was head bookkeeper and confidential clerk for Mr. Patier, President of the New York Store Company, wholesale grocers. In the discharge of his duties he handled large sums of money. For several years he occupied his position of trust, and when he resigned he became a speculator in real estate. Then, when Mr. Comings had closed his duties with Mr. Patier a suspicion arose that he had not been honest, and an investigation by an expert showed a shortage in Comings' accounts of \$8,000.

Comings was at once located in St. Louis, arrested, and taken to Cairo, where he was indicted by the grand jury and released on bail. He at once went to South America. While at Buenos Aires he married an Englishwoman, and a year ago the two came to America. Six weeks ago Mr. and Mrs. Comings arrived in Chicago. The wife with her children went to Cairo a couple of weeks ago, and last Sunday morning Comings himself went to his old home to see his father and mother and bring his family home to Chicago.

DID NOT DISGUISE HIMSELF

It is said that Comings did not take any pains to conceal his identity while in Cairo, but at the same time it is related that, inasmuch as an indictment still rested against

his name, he did not take any pains to renew old acquaintances. At any rate he was seen and recognized, and this is what stirred up the remembrance of the old crime. Comings left Cairo Monday morning, however, and with his father, ex-Judge Comings, came to Chicago.

Monday it became generally known that the man wanted for embezzlement had been in the town where the indictment still rested, and the fact that he had not been arrested created comment. It was decided to arrest him. The Chief of Police at Cairo telegraphed Chief Grennan in this city, asking him to detail a man to arrest Comings when he reached the city. Officers Bailey and Treacy were assigned to the duty, and when Comings alighted from an Illinois Central train Monday evening he was arrested and taken to headquarters.

Comings at once admitted his crime and told the romantic story of his wanderings in South America and the West and his marriage to the Englishwoman with whom he made a tour of Europe. Then, he said, he went back to South America, where he engaged in business. At one time since his first arrest he was in the real estate business in Wichita, Kan., and was a prominent figure there during the famous boom of real estate.

Hearing of the poor health of his father, Comings determined to come home on a visit.

He had hoped time had softened the feeling against him, but his arrest has dispelled this idea.

WILLING TO STAND TRIAL

Comings told the Chicago officers he was willing to return to Cairo and stand trial. This was telegraphed to Cairo, and Chief Mahoney of that place got a bench warrant under the old indictment and came to this city Tuesday, leaving that evening for Cairo with his man. Comings was at once arraigned and a bond of \$1,500 was required for his appearance at the next term of the Circuit Court.

This bond was furnished and Comings, after visiting some relatives and friends, came back to Chicago last night. It is said Comings has secured a position in this city and is making an effort to retrieve his reputation. The police here, however, said yesterday that Comings intended to return today to Central America where, it is said, he has a large coffee plantation.

Comings is 30 years old, dresses well, and is polished and well educated. He thinks public sympathy in Cairo is now in his favor and will help him materially in his trial. Through some technicality the bondsmen who secured his release when he was first arrested were released from responsibility and this fact, it is believed, will have a softening effect on the present prosecution.

Older residents of Cairo claim that while Elmer was awaiting trial he told his friends that he would never be prosecuted because he knew too much about Col. Patier, the owner of the New York Store. He evidently made good his boast, as records fail to show that the case ever came to trial. It is generally understood that old "Judge" Comings arranged some sort of settlement of the case against his son. At any rate, many of the gifts that he had presented to Maud were turned over to Col. Patier. These included her diamond engagement ring and the nude painting that Elmer had purchased for her at the art school in St. Louis. The story is told in Cairo that this painting later found its way into the home of one of Col. Patier's relatives, where it was displayed in the parlor. One day the owner had a visit from the local priest who, upon seeing the nude painting, was so shocked that he ordered it removed, claiming it was immoral. It was removed all right and found its way back into a packing case and in storage—where it remained, dust covered, until December, 1939, when it was uncrated and put on display at the "Maud Tea" (to be described later).

Elmer secured positions at various places in Cairo and finally entered the office of the Cairo

Building and Loan Association as assistant to his father, who was secretary. Then, on Monday, June 7, 1915, this item appeared in the *Cairo Citizen*.

JUDGE COMINGS, OLD RESIDENT OF CAIRO, DEAD

Alfred Comings, age 85 years, Civil War veteran, former police magistrate, notary public, school teacher and popular figure in Cairo, both politically and socially, died this morning. He was three times married. Founder of the Cairo Building and Loan Association 36 years ago, he was at that time elected secretary of the Association and acted in that capacity up to the time of his death.

But sensationalism wasn't through with the Comings family. Twelve days later the *Cairo Citizen* presented this information.

BIG DEFALCATION IN CAIRO BUILDING AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

Elmer E. Comings Charges His Father Manipulated the Funds

An audit of the books of the Association began Wednesday, following the revelation made by Elmer E. Comings, son of the dead secretary, on last Tuesday night to the directors, that his father was short many

thousands of dollars. When a borrower paid off a loan, according to the son's statement, Judge Comings would satisfy the mortgage on the record at the Court House, but would retain the old mortgage in his office. He would take the money that was paid to satisfy the mortgage as "live" in his office, and when audit was made the old mortgage would be there to cover up the money he had taken.

Not until Elmer E. Comings, son of the deceased, revealed the true condition of affairs to the directors did they dream that anything was wrong. According to Mrs. Elmer Comings, her husband first told her of the condition of affairs last Monday, when he determined to tell the truth. It was twelve years ago, she said, that Judge Comings induced his son to come here and help him make his annual report. He kept up that practice for several years. Several years ago he took a position in the office with his father, which he has since held. His family moved down here from St. Louis soon after and have since lived here. During all this time, she says, Judge Comings promised his son to straighten the matter up, but never did so. Mrs. Comings declares that it was the knowledge of this defalcation, and the fact that he must say nothing about it or send his father to prison, that made her husband a physical wreck. Following a nervous breakdown a number of years ago

he has been compelled since then to go about in a wheel chair.

A follow-up story appeared four days later, on June 23, 1915.

EXAMINERS END PROBE OF BOOKS OF CAIRO BUILDING AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

Bogus Loans to the Amount of \$90,000 Found

It is stated that bogus loans have been found to the amount of \$90,000, but there is salvage that will bring the loss down to not over \$60,000 it is believed. While the friends of the late Judge Comings were reluctant to believe that he was involved in the defalcation and were inclined to the opinion that his son Elmer was responsible and had laid the blame upon his father because he was dead and could not speak for himself, and while the books were kept by Elmer E. Comings and all the entries were in his handwriting, Judge Comings was secretary and handled the money and could not have been unaware of what was going on.

Sometimes there seem to be ways of "fixing things up" in small towns. Since the old "Judge" had been secretary of the Building and Loan and not Elmer, the affair just seemed to die out. Elmer in his wheel chair lingered around but a short time and left for the South where he died

years ago. He left behind his wife and several children, one of whom was named Alfred, after the "Judge." "Thad Cannon," who had accompanied Elmer on his tour of the greater part of the world after his flight from the New York Store affair returned to marry Elmer's widow (whom, it is romantically argued in Cairo, he had loved in silence all those many years). Cannon died a few years ago, but his and Elmer's widow is still living.

And there the story should logically end. Even a first-rate melodrama could demand no more. But more there was! For there was Elmer's son Alfred. And, if actions are any indication, Alfred was a "chip off the old block"—two old blocks, to be exact.

After holding various jobs around Cairo and marrying a Cairo girl (much against the wishes of her mother, it is understood), he evidently decided to do a little wandering around the country, and so left Cairo for the South.

Then, on January 10, 1931, the *Cairo Citizen* broke this news to its reading public.

MAN IDENTIFIED AS CAIROITE IS
HELD AS BANDIT

A man identified by Memphis police as Alfred W. Comings of Cairo is being held in

jail at Sardis, Miss., on a charge of being one of two men who robbed the Planters Bank of Como, Miss., at noon Friday of \$1500 and escaped in a stolen car.

Comings and Thos. Holt drove the stolen car to a point two miles from the bank, where Gordon Stover, third member of the holdup plot, was waiting in a Chrysler coupe belonging to Comings, according to the Memphis police. Abandoning the stolen car, the three men sped toward Webb, Miss., where they were captured by Sheriff Dogan three hours after the robbery and following an exciting chase by Sheriff Dogan and Jailer Bob Walters.

Holt and Stover are reported by Memphis and Sardis authorities to have confessed to their part in the robbery. It was Comings who is reported to have gathered up the money as Holt held the gun on a woman cashier and a man in the bank. In his nervousness Comings overlooked several hundred dollars in a cash drawer, the cashier reported.

Memphis, Jan. 10 (AP).—Within three hours after the Planters Bank of Como, Miss., had been robbed of \$1500 at noon yesterday the two men who held up the cashier, Mrs. E. B. Blaylock, and their "look-out" had been captured at Sumner, identified, the loot recovered and two of the three had confessed.

This morning Inspector Parker of the identification bureau and Lieut. Quianthy of the Memphis police went to Sardis, where the robbers were jailed last night, in the expectation of linking them with recent robberies of banks at Oakville and Collierville, and the Bank of Nesbitt, Miss., for the ring-leader of the band, according to his pals, had been living in Memphis at least three months.

The three held at Sardis are A. W. Comings, 35, of the Gilmore Apts., Memphis; Thomas Holt, 24; and Gordon Stover, 20. Holt and Stover, after their capture, said Comings engineered the robbery. Holt said that Comings picked him up first in Memphis, and later they picked up Stover. Holt admitted that he held the pistol on Mrs. Blaylock while Comings gathered in the money. After the exciting chase from Webb, Sheriff Dogan's car blocked the Chrysler coupe of the bandits, and a curt command at pistol point resulted in the robbers' surrender. In the car was found \$1566 in a sack on the floor and \$100 in Comings' pocket. Comings had on him a .25 caliber automatic pistol, and a .45 automatic was found in the side pocket of the car.

Comings and Holt were identified in the jail at Sumner late yesterday by Chancellor Sledge of Como, who was in the bank at the time of the robbery. Information gathered at Como and Memphis showed the robbery

was carefully planned, for it was in the stolen car of C. T. Lindgren, who also lives at the Gilmore Apts., Memphis, that Comings and Holt appeared in front of the bank of Como at noon. Meanwhile Stover, in Comings' Chrysler coupe, was parked two miles north of town. A negro saw Stover walking around the car nervously and told the Como police that the car remained parked on the road three hours, until Comings and Holt drove up furiously in Lindgren's car shortly before 1 o'clock and they all drove away in the coupe, abandoning the Lindgren machine.

Only Chancellor Sledge and Mrs. Blaylock were in the bank when the two bandits entered. "Throw 'em up and be quick about it" was the best Holt could think of as he pulled the pistol. Comings was in a hurry. He scooped up all the cash that he could find, but overlooked several hundred dollars in a drawer in the cage. They both rushed from the bank and drove off in the stolen car.

In Memphis meanwhile, Detective Raney traced Comings to the Gilmore Apts., where he had lived three months. The license on the Chrysler coupe was issued to Mrs. Isabelle Comings in Chicago. He had told the management of the Gilmore that he was a salesman for an ornamental iron works. Comings got Mr. Lindgren's car by a clever ruse. He left his car, which he ordinarily kept in the Gilmore garage, out in front on

the street on Thursday night. Then he stayed up until 3 o'clock Friday morning, spending most of the time talking to the night manager of the Gilmore. Then early in the a. m. he went to the garage to get "his car." It was Mr. Lindgren's that he got, and presumably Stover drove Comings' car from Memphis to Como.

Two days later the *Citizen* published this information.

CAIRO MAN IS HELD UNDER A \$25,000 BOND

Alfred Comings, 38, well-known Cairo man, is being held in jail at Jackson, Miss., on a bond of \$25,000 on a charge of complicity in the robbery of the bank at Como, Miss., last Friday. Oscar Winters and Gordon Stover are also held in \$25,000 each. Winters and Stover at first told the authorities that Comings had taken part in the actual holdup, but later admitted that they were the ones who went to the bank and took the money. Their story is that Comings was the brains behind the robbery, and that he first broached the subject after he had taken them to a cafe and given them clothes, after they had stopped him on the street in Memphis and begged him for something to eat.

The three men were captured three hours after the robbery. They were in Comings' Chrysler coupe. Comings is re-

ported to have stolen at Memphis the machine in which the two bandits drove to and from the bank.

Police say that Comings got a plan of the bank when he called there two weeks previous to the robbery and reported himself as a salesman of refrigerator boxes for the Holcomb and Holt Manufacturing Company in Indianapolis. He had wanted the bank officers to give him the names of customers and had spent considerable time at the bank on his visit.

And then the Associated Press sent out this story of the verdict on March 28.

FOUND GUILTY OF ROBBERY
BY MISSISSIPPI JURY

Memphis, Tenn. (AP).—A verdict of guilty was rendered today in the trial of Alfred Comings, former Memphis and Cairo salesman, charged with bank robbery in connection with the holdup of the Planters Bank in Como. The case went to the jury late yesterday. Comings was charged with having furnished Gordon Stover and Oscar Winters, youths who pleaded guilty to the robbery, with transportation to and from Como. At the time of the holdup Comings denied that he was involved in the robbery. Comings, Stover, and Winters were each sentenced to seven years in prison.

When Alfred's cellmate was released Alfred sent him to Cairo, where his wife and friends made it extremely pleasant for him. Eventually Alfred got a divorce and Mrs. Comings married again. Maud necessarily left readers hanging on a limb about many things at the close of her Journal. In this instance *It Happened in Cairo* adopts the same tactics. Whom did Alfred's former wife marry? Three guesses ought to do it . . .

Such is the life story of Maud's Elmer, his father, and his son. Except for one little item which should be noted in passing. It appeared in the *Cairo Bulletin* on a long ago September day in 1879, even before Marchal Niel roses began to proclaim his sterling qualities in the Rittenhouse home on Walnut Street.

Elmer E. Comings' stock for his book, news and stationery store arrived yesterday. He has taken the room on Eighth Street temporarily and will open today. On the first of November he will move into the store now occupied by Barclay Bros. next to Phil Saup. Elmer is full of enterprise and Yankee pluck and is bound to be successful.

Chapter VI

"DOORS OPEN AT 7:00"

Maud was an inveterate theatre-goer. Perhaps no one in all Cairo was so excited and pleased as she when the Opera House opened its handsome new doors to the public. In her Journal she records going to the opening performance on December 15, 1881. The *Daily Bulletin* for that date carried the following ad, followed the next day by a long account of the opening and a description of the Opera House.

Cairo Opera House
Opening Attraction
December 15, 1881
Fay Templeton & Company in
The Mascotte
Admission 25-50-75-\$1.00
Doors Open at 7:00
Performance Commences at 7:45

Daily Bulletin, Dec. 16, 1881.

The Mascotte, as produced by the Fay Templeton Company at the Opera House last night will certainly become one of the most popular plays in the country, and will place

Miss Fay's name among the brightest stars in the firmament of the American stage. Miss Fay was, of course, the principal attraction upon the stage.

Unlike the *Bulletin's* prediction in 1879 about Elmer being successful, it was just about 100% right regarding Miss Fay. When Fay Templeton appeared at the opening of the Cairo Opera House she was just sixteen years of age. She was the toast of the gay 90's as a singing and acting star in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Later she was soubrette for Weber and Fields, popularizing the song, *Rosey, You are My Posey*. Her crowning engagement was with George M. Cohan, as "Mary" in "45 Minutes from Broadway," singing the well remembered *Mary Is a Grand Old Name*. Fay Templeton passed away on October 3, 1939, at the age of 74, one of the most beloved stars of the American stage.

On April 9, 1882, the Opera House ran the following ad in the *Bulletin*.

Cairo Opera House
2 Nights—Mon. and Tues.
April 10-11
Oliver Doud Byron
Supported by the Charming Actress
Miss Kate Byron
"Across the Continent"
"10,000 Miles Away"
333—Laughs in Each Play—333

Maud writes of attending "Across the Continent" with Elmer. No doubt her sentiments were similar to those expressed in the *Bulletin* on April 12.

The plays rendered here by the Doud Byron Combination have all the elements of popularity. They abound in striking situations and pert sayings pregnant with wit of the street and the prairie, and have all the charm of Dime Novel personified and realized.

The many admirers that Maud had, combined with her love of the theatre, must have led her to attend most of the big attractions that came to town. Although she tells of many which she saw, she no doubt was an appreciative on-looker at many more that found no listing in her diary as published. Among the attractions that appeared at the Opera House during the time she must have been a habitual playgoer were these once-heralded offerings: Minnie Maddern in "Foggs Ferry"; Stephens Comic Opera Company presenting "The Jolly Bachelors"; Katie Putnam in "The Little Detective." On January 30, 1883, M. B. Curtis appeared in "Sam'l of Posen" as played 200 nights in New York. The *Bulletin* had this to say on January 31, "The Opera House was packed last night. Every seat was taken

upstairs and downstairs, and a number were compelled to stand in the 'promenade' throughout the performance. The whole play and every part of it was strongly given." Later there appeared Pete Baker in "Chris and Lena"; Milton and Dollie Nobles in "From Sire to Son"; Thomas Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle"; Lewis Morrison in "Faust," with the Marvelous Brocken Scene, the Pinnacle of Stagecraft; James O'Neill in "The Count of Monte Cristo"; Newton Beers in "Enoch Arden"; Roland Reed in "The Woman Hater"; Bonnie Kate Castleton in "A Paper Doll"; Robert Downing in "Count Claudio"; Sam T. Jacks Company presenting Lily Clays in "Beauty in Dreamland" and "The Devil's Frolic." The prices were always 25c-50c-75c, except for the week's engagement of The Little Sunbeam, Eunice Goodrich, when prices were 10c-20c-30c. And as a souvenir of the Goodrich engagement three gold watches were given away to the persons holding the lucky numbers — one at Wednesday matinee, one at Saturday matinee, and one on Saturday night. The Holden Comedy Company were also there for one week in 1890 at 10c-20c-30c. On September 11, 1882, Sells Bros. Circus exhibited in Cairo, and was followed on September 30 by the Four Paw Circus. On Saturday, June 30, 1888, the John Robinson

Circus made its appearance. Gilmore's Band appeared at the Opera House in May, 1888, and the prices were \$1.00 and \$1.25.

Maud's love of footlights and greasepaint was too strong to let her remain always in front of the stage. She was perhaps Cairo's favorite amateur in the 1880's and 90's. Certainly there was always a role waiting for her in the home talent plays.

On July 1, 1883, she gives quite some space to the description of her costume in an amateur play at the Opera House, and in the *Bulletin* of June 27 is the following account of this performance.

ENGAGED

Last night the much talked of little society play of the above title was presented at the Opera House by members of the Ideal League.

Cast of Characters

Chevoit Hill	-----	George Parsons
Mr. Symperson	-----	W. F. Korsmeyer
Angus McGillcuddy	-----	G. T. Carnes
Major McGillcuddy	-----	E. Y. Crowell
Belinda	-----	Adele Gordon
Minnie	-----	Maud Rittenhouse
Mrs. Macfarlane	-----	Effie Coleman
Parker	-----	Bessie Korsmeyer
Attendants, Etc., by members of the League		

Misses Gordon, Rittenhouse and Howard possess much dramatic talent. A calliope song by the former was one of the unusual gems of the performance. Miss Rittenhouse displayed enough coolness and presence of mind for half a dozen, and her delivery and movements betoken a complete sinking of self in the character she took.

On Thursday, April 19, 1894, at midnight, Maud writes of the howling success of "Priscilla," and the following account of the performance is from a Cairo paper of the next day:

"Priscilla" Presented by Home Talent
To a Large and Fashionable Audience
At the Opera House Last Night

Cairo amateurs are achieving fame in the theatre. They take rank with many professionals on the operatic stage. This is especially true of members of the Cairo Opera Company. The character of "Priscilla" was assigned to Miss Pearl Lancaster, and right royally did she sustain it. She has fine stage presence and is perfectly at ease and self-possessed before the footlights. Her voice was under perfect control and all her songs were given with the ease of a finished musician. Her acting could scarcely be improved upon. "Resignation" was a charmingly successful character, assumed by Miss

Maud Rittenhouse, who scored a decided triumph. She is one of Cairo's most accomplished young ladies and made more out of the middle-aged spinster's part than almost anyone could have done. Her make-up was perfect. Her acting and her singing were as perfect as her make-up. The song in which "Hatebad" proposed and was accepted was so enthusiastically applauded that it had to be repeated, and even then there were symptoms of a second encore, which was checked by the appearance of the others in whom the audience was interested.

On February 16, 1895, Maud writes of her taking part in "Damon and Pythias" at the Opera House. She gives a more detailed account of the performance than the weekly *Citizen* of February 21, 1895, which simply says:

The drama "Damon and Pythias" was presented at the Opera House last Friday evening by local talent under the direction of Lawrence McCarty and pleased a large audience. The entertainment was given under the auspices of the K. of P., and the proceeds, quite a large sum, will be given to charity.

Mr. McCarty took the leading role Damon. David S. Lansden made a good Pythias. His experience in amateur theatricals has given him an easy-bearing manner on the stage. Miss Maud Ritten-

house as Hermion, wife of Damon, was splendid. Every move, every gesture and facial expression convinced the audience that she had completely put on the character she represented. Miss Pearl Lancaster made a most beautiful bride of Pythias and sustained her part well . . .

Cairo people who recall both these presentations and Maud herself like to make mention of the delight she seemed to experience in driving past the Theatre Comique of an evening when the band was outside giving its free pre-performance concert. Often, it is claimed, she used to make her horse, or the horse of her escort who drove, prance to the beat of the music. The Comique was a theatre for men only!

The Opera House itself still stands on Commercial Avenue, a dingy-looking shell of its former magnificence. It is used as a moving picture house for the negro population.

There's a favorite little story which crops out in Cairo conversation now and then and has its locale at the old Opera House. It seems that one Gus Botto, a saloon keeper of the early days, found it expedient one night to remove six barrels of whisky from one of his saloons (some argue it was the old "Bucket of Blood," which stood on

stilts near the edge of town) and hide them. Immediately he thought of the Opera House. Whether he stored them in the house itself or in some upstairs room in the same building is uncertain. But this much is known. He returned to the "old country" and was gone for 18 or 20 years. When he came back to Cairo he had completely forgotten about the whisky. But some of his friends hadn't. He was reminded of the episode. And together, he and Jacob Zimmerman went to investigate. They found the barrels still there, with the content evaporated to one-fourth of its former amount in each barrel. Botto bottled it and passed it out to his friends, who swore that more potently delicious beverage was never concocted, and that a taste would send a tingle to the toes.

While actors and actresses were trodding the boards of Cairo's theatres, their less famous sisters and brothers of the acting profession were presenting lusty melodramas on the showboats which pulled up at the levee. One of the first showboats on the rivers visited Cairo on October 15, 1880. It was Dan Rice's Floating Opera House and Museum on the Mammoth Steamer Champion No. 9.

The last of the famous old-time river showboats, French's New Sensation, a one-time palatial

floating showhouse that attracted thousands up and down the waterfronts, had been on the Marine Ways at Mound City (just north on the river from Cairo) for some time when a near tornado struck Southern Illinois several years ago and smashed the showboat to pieces. Its demolition wrote "finis" to one of the most colorful, dramatic chapters in the history of the rivers.

Maud does not record the coming and going of the showboats. Evidently they were beneath her level of dramatic appreciation—not having undergone revival then at the hands of sophisticates, as they have in recent years.

Chapter VII

MANY TIMES A BRIDESMAID . . . FINALLY A BRIDE

The hectic, happy days through which Maud moved as she penned the last entry in her 14-year Journal reached their climax on June 6, 1895. Something of the high esteem with which Cairo people regarded Maud is shown in the following story from the *Cairo Citizen* of Thursday, June 13, 1895.

JOINED IN HOLY WEDLOCK

Miss Maud Rittenhouse and Dr. Earl
Hugh Mayne Married Last
Thursday Evening

“As Heaven has blessed your nuptials,
May earthly joys crown you;
With Hymen’s torch illumined,
Your path be ever bright.”

This glad benediction burst from the throats of a score of young ladies and large audience assembled in the Presbyterian Church last Thursday evening. While they did not take up the refrain, they voiced the sentiment at least.

The occasion was the celebration of marriage of Miss Maud Rittenhouse to Dr. Earl H. Mayne of Brooklyn, N. Y. The church had been handsomely decorated in honor of the event. It was a pink and white wedding and those colors predominated, while garlands of greens and banks of ferns were tastefully arranged around the platform and over the organ. Eight-thirty o'clock was the hour for the services, and promptly the bridal party arrived. To the notes of Lohengrin's wedding march sung by a chorus of ladies in the choir they proceeded down the aisle in the following order: Misses Winnie Ellis, Lida Halliday, Pearl Halley, Genevieve Baker, Emma and Mattie Halliday, Daisy Foster and Margie Lansden; the ushers, Messrs. Julius Schuh, Charles P. Wenger, Dr. Sam'l Dodds of Anna, and Mr. Eugene Lyons of Chicago; the bridesmaids, Miss Liliias Wood and Hattie Clark of St. Louis; the little bridesmaids, Edna Easterday, Helen Lewis, Helen Dougherty, and Alice Morse; the maid of honor, Miss Carolyn Finch of Anna; and finally the bride, leaning upon the arm of her father, Wood Rittenhouse.

The bride was attired in an elegant dress of white satin trimmed with real lace made en train, and wore a bridal veil. She carried a large bouquet of white rosebuds. The maid of honor was costumed in pink satin trimmed with chiffon, and carried a bouquet

of pink carnations. The bridesmaids wore white swiss over pink and carried pale pink carnations. The little bridesmaids wore white china silk dresses with pink stockings and slippers, and carried pink carnations. The chorus girls were dressed in white swiss with pink ribbons and carried bouquets of pink larkspur.

Arriving at the platform, where the groom and his best man, Dr. H. H. Rittenhouse (Maud's brother), were in waiting, the party took their positions and the Rev. C. T. Phillips, pastor of the church, performed the solemn service. The scene at this stage was most beautiful. The pretty faces and handsome costumes, the pleasing harmony of the colors and the tasteful grouping made it a picturesque scene. The ceremony concluded, again the sweet notes of the Lohengrin wedding march were sung by the chorus as the party slowly wended its way out of the church. The chorus was composed of the Misses Effie Lansden, Pearl Lancaster, Marion Jenelle, Nellie Fisher, Theo Thrupp, Eva Bingham, Alice Halliday, Mary Wood, and Mrs. Edith Ellis, Charles Wall, W. J. Johnston and Frank Spencer. They were under the leadership of Mrs. Lansden, and Mrs. Albert Lewis presided at the organ.

After the ceremony at the church a reception was held at the home of the bride's

parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Rittenhouse, corner of Seventh and Walnut. Here the friends came and showered their congratulations upon the bride and the groom, viewing the array of beautiful gifts and enjoying the hospitality of the host and hostess until a late hour.

Dr. and Mrs. Mayne left at 2:25 a. m. for St. Louis where they remained until Sunday evening. From St. Louis they went to Mason City, Iowa, the home of Dr. Mayne's parents. They will be at home at Bath Beach, a suburb of Brooklyn, about July 1st.

Dr. Mayne's bride is an exceptionally talented young lady. She is an ardent devotee of art, and her natural gift has been supplemented by a thorough art education. She has also been very successful as a writer, and her contributions to literature have been numerous. Her musical talent coupled with her knowledge of acting has brought her frequent demands for public entertainments. But it has been her intense personality that has made her a favorite with everyone. Bright and vivacious, ever willing to lend her time and talents to forward a good cause, she has the happy faculty of always saying a kind word for everyone. She was always very active in temperance work and was largely instrumental in the organization of the Y. W. C. T. U. here. Her departure from Cairo will not only be missed in her own family circle where she was the only

daughter, but in the scores of hearts where her friendship is cherished.

Dr. Mayne is a most estimable gentleman. He met his bride six years ago when he was employed here in the engineer's office in the construction of the Illinois Central bridge. Since that time he has studied medicine, and graduated from Bellevue College, New York City. Our highest wish for them is that he may prove a worthy companion for his bride . . .

(Dr. and Mrs. Mayne still live in Brooklyn and are the parents of three daughters, two of whom are living.)

Chapter VIII

AMONG THOSE PRESENT

Perhaps it was Maud's own warm, vibrant personality that drew such interesting people into her circle of friendship. Or maybe it was just the nature of Cairo then, as now, to have a cross-section of picturesque citizenry. At any rate drama, in one form or another, seems to have touched the lives of most of the friends who frequented the Rittenhouse home. What happened to them after Maud closed the pages of her Journal would be a gold mine for an O. Henry.

Take, for instance, "the Duke." "The Duke" was none other than George E. O'Hara, a young man in the ice and lumber business, who figured among Maud's admirers. On Nov. 13, 1893, he married Lizzie Shields, a friend of Maud's with whom she frequently records going horseback riding.

Residents of Cairo who were in the city prior to 1893 say that events both before and after the wedding of Miss Shields and "the Duke" were dramatic in the extreme. Friends of Miss Shields

had expected that she would marry Dr. W. P. Malone, a young physician then in Cairo. However, Capt. Shields, it is understood, became indebted to Mr. O'Hara for quite a sum of money which he was unable to repay. His daughter, considered by many as the most beautiful and talented young lady in Cairo, was persuaded by her father to marry Mr. O'Hara, who would then be a member of the family and the debt could be forgotten. The engagement was announced to the amazement of all of Miss Shields' friends, and the *Citizen* of Nov. 16, 1893, tells the story of the wedding.

MARRIED IN STATE

A truly splendid wedding was that which occurred at the Church of the Redeemer on Monday evening, when George E. O'Hara and Miss Lizzie Shields, daughter of Capt. Thomas Shields, were united in holy wedlock. All that could make a scene brilliant and joyful was done. Beautiful flowers and brilliant lights vied with the beauty and brilliancy of the company present to make a scene attractive, and the sentiment of the crowd found expression in the words of the chorus, "God Save the Bride, Long May She Live." The bridal party consisted, in addition to the bride and groom, of Miss Ann Leseuer of Jefferson City, Mo., maid of honor, and Miss Suze Leseuer of Lexington,

Mo., bridesmaid, both cousins of the bride; Dr. Sam Dodd of Anna, best man. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. F. A. DeRosset, and then the party repaired to the home of Capt. Shields on Walnut Street, where time was spent in congratulations and preparations for the departure of the bride on the Mobile & Ohio for St. Louis. Mr. and Mrs. O'Hara will sail from New York on Saturday for Europe, where they will spend a few months in travel before returning to Cairo to live. Both Mr. O'Hara and his bride have been leaders in Cairo society. Mr. O'Hara is junior member of the firm of DeMontcourt and O'Hara, lumber dealers, but his natural suavity secured the position of President of the Board of Trade and the leadership when strangers were to be entertained or banquetted. Friends from abroad were in attendance at the wedding.

After returning from their wedding trip Mr. and Mrs. O'Hara went to live in the handsome Shields' residence. Years later the firm of DeMontcourt and O'Hara met with business reverses and Mr. O'Hara left Cairo for Mississippi where his firm had a number of mills. While there one of the children, whose health had become bad, was taken by Mrs. O'Hara to Colorado. The lumber company in the meantime failed and Mr. O'Hara left for Texas.

He carried life insurance to the amount of \$20,000. So when reverses closed in about him and he became fearful that his wife and two daughters would be in want, he took his own life in order that they might collect the insurance money.

According to last reports, Mrs. O'Hara and her daughters are now living in the southwest.

One of Maud's most persistent admirers, and one who claimed to have loved her since she was eleven, was William Williamson (WmSm, Jack), a Cairo printer.

On Friday night, April 14, 1882, she attended a reception with him aboard the steamer *City of Cairo*. This new steamer belonged to the Anchor Line, which had a boat named for every city on its route from St. Louis to New Orleans. The reception took place when the steamer, bound for Memphis, arrived at Cairo on her maiden voyage. The *Bulletin* for the day following the reception carried this account of the affair.

The steamer *City of Cairo* arrived last night at 8 o'clock and her appearance was hailed with enthusiasm. Several guns were fired in honor of her arrival, and we might say that several thousand people thronged the levee as she came into port. The rush

when she landed was indescribable, for in one common mass regardless of color, race or association everyone was curious to see the *City of Cairo*.

The arrival here was the occasion of a reception and presentation of a set of colors, tendered by the citizens of Cairo, and it was a most festive event. At the appointed time Hon. T. W. Halliday called the assembly to order and, after fine introductory remarks, proceeded to read the resolution passed by the city council at its last meeting. He was followed by Mayor Thistlewood who, with a very appropriate address, presented to Capt. Vickers for the boat and the Anchor Line Company a beautiful set of colors made of fine Spanish bunting. After the ceremony was over the company indulged in a dance to the tunes of a fine string orchestra and thus spent several hours most pleasantly.

The concluding feature, and by no means the least important part of the grand affair was the supper, spread for the assemblage on a series of tables richly decorated with glittering ware. The supper was pronounced by all who partook of it as one of the most costly and attractive and varied feasts they ever sat down to. It consisted of everything the most fastidious could ask for and was prepared in a masterly manner.

Maud tried to discourage Williamson's attentions that night, and later broke her friendship with him because he was reputed to have taken some drinks while aboard the boat. Cairo people who remember Williamson say that he was very temperate—in fact, anything but a “drinking man.” After leaving Cairo he went to St. Louis where, it is understood, he still lives.

William N. Butler, a Cairo lawyer, was likewise a great friend of Maud's. In the *Bulletin* for July 4, 1884, is the announcement that “Mr. William N. Butler has consented to deliver the oration at the Park today and Miss Maud Rittenhouse will read the Declaration of Independence.”

Butler was elected states attorney in 1884 and again in '88, '92 and '96. He married at Fairbury, Ill., in 1885. In 1903 he was made judge of the circuit court, a position he held until his death, June 2, 1924.

It was said of Judge Butler that during dull days in court he often provoked the attorneys, jury and audience to laughter with his imitations of old-time lawyers, politicians and famous statesmen of the past whom he had known. He had a keen sense of humor. Court never convened with him presiding that he did not have a

new list of jokes which no one had ever told before. Many of the jokes pointed a moral and were made to illustrate some point in law.

The Rittenhouse home was large and friendly, and newcomers to Cairo practically placed themselves on waiting lists for a chance to board with the family. There was Charles Wenger (so liked as a friend by Maud) who roomed with Robin during the last days of Maud's Journal. He was a bookkeeper at the City National Bank and, in point of service, held the position of trust for a long time. Ill health finally forced him to retire, but he lived in Cairo until his death.

Earlier, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Menager, friends of the Rittenhouse family, had made their home with them. Mr. Menager was manager of the local branch of the Standard Oil Company in Cairo. Later he became cashier of the Memphis (Tenn.) Savings Bank and left Cairo in April, 1884. It was on a Christmas Day about 1907 that the *New York World* carried the following item under a Memphis (Tenn.) date line.

The Memphis Savings Bank failed to open yesterday having been placed in the hands of a receiver. It is one of the oldest institutions in the city and carries deposits of over a million and a half dollars.

Rev. F. P. Davenport (Dean) of the Church of the Redeemer, a close friend of both the Rittenhouse family and the Menagers, spent considerable time there also. All of Cairo was heartsick when he received a call to the Calvary Church at Memphis.

Maud records making a hatband for "Blauvi," one of her very dear friends and admirers with whom she often used to go buggy-riding. In October, 1892, "Blauvi" married Ella Armstrong, a Cairo schoolteacher. The *Bulletin* treats the wedding in this manner.

It was 3 o'clock. The afternoon sun shone brightly through the stained glass windows of the Church of the Redeemer yesterday afternoon, lighting up the beautiful interior made more beautiful on this occasion by the bright costumes of the fair audience and the lovely floral decorations. The sweet strains from the great organ seemed but a counterpart of the surroundings. Five minutes lapsed, and then the merry notes of the wedding march announced the arrival of the bridal party. Treading slowly the long aisle, preceded by the ushers—Messrs. Joe Jackson, Frank Shearer, George E. O'Hara, Harry Hughes, Charles Wenger and Wood Rittenhouse—came the fair bride leaning upon the arm of her betrothed, Miss Ella Armstrong and Mr.

William C. Blauvelt. Again the notes of the organ became subdued as the Rev. Pharas of Anna performed the marriage ceremony binding together two hearts in the holy bonds of wedlock. Repeating the solemn vows and receiving the blessing they turned again and as the organ once more pealed forth in glad refrain, echoing the feelings in the hearts of everyone, they retraced their steps down the aisle, and entered carriages and werê driven away. Mr. and Mrs. Blauvelt left on the afternoon train for Chicago. After the dedication ceremonies at the World's Fair, they will go to Portland, Ore., and other points in the West, returning to be at home at Mrs. J. C. Hancock's on Tenth Street after Nov. 15th.

(The Blauvelts moved to Chicago years later, where Mr. Blauvelt died. After his death Mrs. Blauvelt returned to Cairo and resumed her school teaching for a time. She now lives in the north part of the state.)

Miss S. H. Risley, another schoolteacher whom Maud mentions frequently and who was at one time principal of the Safford School in Cairo, died in Hartford, N. Y., on Nov. 16, 1939. Had she lived until Nov. 30 she would have been 90 years of age.

Among those who helped wear the carpets thin at the Rittenhouse residence was Erich Schwartze—that is, until the winter of 1887. For on Nov. 17, 1887, the following item appeared in the *Citizen*.

Last evening at 5 o'clock in the Episcopal church Mr. E. W. Schwartze and Miss Clara White were married by the Rev. F. P. Davenport. Both Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz are well-known here and much liked by all. A reception was given for them at the residence of Mrs. Seymour, corner of Fourteenth and Commercial. Mr. and Mrs. Schwartze will go to housekeeping at once on Twentieth Street.

(Mr. Schwartze was a bank-clerk in Cairo for a number of years after his marriage. Then he and Mrs. Schwartze moved to Arkansas where he was employed in another bank. He later took his own life by shooting himself.)

The society column of the *Cairo Citizen* of Oct. 24, 1889, contained this item.

The marriage of Mr. E. C. Halliday, of the firm of Halliday and Aisthorpe, and Miss Beatrice Orr, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Orr, was solemnized at the Episcopal church yesterday afternoon at 1:30. The ushers for the occasion were Messrs. Buzby, Butts, Fred Galigher, William C. Blauvelt, George

Bell and T. W. Halliday, Jr. At the close of the ceremony the bridal party entered carriages and were driven to the Illinois Central depot where they took the train at 2:20 for a short wedding tour.

The E. C. Halliday referred to is the "Ned" Halliday whom Maud disliked because she suspected him of blackballing Elmer at the Ideal League meeting when they voted upon Elmer's admission to the League. That meeting was on Nov. 6, 1883, and Maud at that time expressed to her Journal the belief that a hundred or so Ned Hallidays would never be worth a single Elmer. (As one Cairoite remarked after reading *Maud*, "Ned Halliday seems to have been the only member of the Ideal League who really had any sense.") The Ideal League Hall is still standing, and over the door is a sign reading, "Safford Lodge No. 26—I. O. O. F."

After disposing of his interest in the firm of Halliday and Aisthorpe, Mr. Halliday entered the insurance business, which he operated successfully for many years. He retired several years ago, but continues to live in Cairo.

Numbered among Maud's admirers was one "Mr. Kent," whom the Rittenhouse family had taken into its circle of friends. Consequently,

the whole household was shocked to read the following account in the weekly *Citizen* of Jan. 2, 1890.

SHORT IN HIS ACCOUNTS

Another Cairo society man (by this time it was getting to be a habit) has turned out to be a defaulter. This time it is Mr. James E. Kent. While acting as assistant cashier of the C. C. C. and St. L. railroad here he succeeded in appropriating \$1,436.90 of the company's money. The shortage was discovered earlier in the year by the cashier, Frank Welsh, but Kent begged not to be exposed and Walsh kept the matter a secret, receiving from Kent due bills to cover the amount of the shortage and a written acknowledgement of the crime. Hearing that the auditors were coming to check up the office, Mr. Walsh, fearing that he would be held responsible for the shortage, left for Chicago, sending his brother, Mr. P. Walsh, the paper he held, together with a confession of his own. The brothers made up the shortage and laid the case before the auditors and Mr. Kent was forced to confess. Mr. Frank Walsh was then exonerated and has returned and resumed his position in the office. A warrant was issued for Kent's arrest but he could not be found, having left the city last Friday at 1:10 a. m. for the North, boarding an Illinois Central train at the upper end of the city. Kent came to the city about two

years ago and, being well recommended, was admitted to the best society. He left numerous creditors behind him . . .

What ever became of Mr. Kent no one seems to know (and, as one citizen when asked said, "or care!"). The ironical thing about the whole situation was that Maud, so often in her Journal, had commented on how much he reminded her of Elmer!

Chapter IX

THE MAUD TEA

Probably Maud's name was never mentioned more in Cairo homes when she lived there in the 80's and 90's than it has been during the months since her diary has been published. For weeks and weeks now she has crept into conversations over the bridge tables, on the golf links, in the barber chairs . . . yes, even over fried mush breakfasts in the negro cabins. Family albums, paintings, old trunks, and musty bundles of letters have come down out of attics and tower rooms. Everybody is trying to clear the cobwebs away from his memories of Maud and her friends.

This form of activity was greatly heightened during the first days of last December, when preparations were being made for the "Maud Tea," an affair which brought people from miles around to Cairo for the afternoon. The following account of the tea appeared in the Cairo *Evening Citizen* of Dec. 8, 1939.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Rust, 703 Walnut Street, and the former home of

Maud Rittenhouse Mayne who wrote the six journals which comprise one of today's best sellers, *Maud*, was the scene of a "Maud Tea" given Thursday afternoon (December 7) by the ladies of the Guild Auxiliary of the Church of the Redeemer.

Guests were greeted at the door by Miss Lillian Schutter (Mrs. Selden Fisher). In the receiving line at the door of the parlor were Mama Rittenhouse (Mrs. A. E. Rust), Maud (Mrs. E. W. Fairbairn), Elmer (Miss Flora Schutter), Edith, Maud's cousin of whom she was very fond (Miss Ruth Wallbaum), Eugene Ellis (Mrs. Richard Dennison), William Williamson (Mrs. V. T. Reese), and Grandma Arter (Mrs. G. L. Hagen). Among the other characters represented were Misses Daisy, Alice and Vesta Halliday, Lizzie Shields, Eva Shepard, Wint Dunning, Nellie Gilbert, Mary Baker, and Corrine Cheek.

The ladies were dressed in beautiful dresses of the period, rich satins, brocades, laces and heavy linen with full skirts and bustles, tight bodices and tiny waists. Those representing men were dressed in tuxedos and high hats.

In a room opposite the parlor were exhibited pictures of Maud's family and acquaintances. Among them were Pearl Lancaster; Mary and Lizzie Wood; a family

picture of Mr. and Mrs. Rittenhouse, Maud and her four brothers; her beloved teachers Miss Ford, Anna and Mollie Riley; Walter Wood; Mayor and Mrs. John M. Lansden; and most important, a picture of Elmer Comings. A drawing of Venus de Milo made by Maud in 1885 and paintings by her pupils, Mrs. John Frey, Miss Margaret Lansden and Mrs. Pearl Halley Nelson were also shown.

A painting by Maud's teacher in St. Louis, which had been purchased by Elmer and presented to Maud but later given to his father to be sold to replace money Elmer embezzled, was recently found in a storeroom of the old New York Store.

Guests were entertained during the afternoon by a fine program, including a reading "Order for a Picture" given by Miss Alice Reed, "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight" by Mrs. John M. Dill, and old-fashioned songs by Miss Ruth Wallbaum and Miss Hattie Eisenberg.

On a beautiful carved marble table was found a red plush family album and beside it a number of fringed Christmas cards as mentioned by Maud in her Journal.

Guests having any breath left after ohing and ahing over the colorful costumes and precious old treasures exhibited ventured up the narrow stairs leading from the second floor to the tower room where Maud had her studio.

Refreshments of tea and delicious old-fashioned orange pudding were served in the dining room. The tea and coffee were poured from lovely old silver pots by Mrs. B. S. Hutcheson and Mrs. Louise Hilleary.

Guests hesitated to leave the picturesque old house where hospitality of the 80's and an air of gay comraderie prevailed. During the afternoon several of the characters rode through the streets in a surrey belonging to Miss Alice Reed and driven by a negro coachman, and called at the home of Wood Rittenhouse, brother of Maud, who is confined to his home by illness.

When Maud lived in the Rittenhouse home on the corner of Seventh and Walnut it was a fifteen-room house. Today the imposing red brick structure has ten rooms, two baths, two large halls, big porches, and a fence running around the yard, with a gate reminiscent of the one Maud used to swing on with her beaux. The house is now owned and lived in by the A. E. Rust family, whose prominence and hospitality have made them practically as much a part of Cairo life today as the Rittenhouse family was in its time. (The present writer lived there with the Rust family for almost two years—until June, 1939—occupying an upstairs room and hearing stories of

how a certain "Maud Rittenhouse" had sat there and penned a girlhood diary.)

A very peculiar coincidence makes it seem that Maud has never really left the house. For Miss Margaret Rust, one of the daughters, is art supervisor in the Cairo public schools and gives lessons from her studio in the tower room, even as did Maud. Just as in the 1880's, when Maud's paintings decorated the parlor walls, the house furnishings today are enriched with Margaret's paintings. And the same windows that gave light to Maud as she sat painting hatbands, satin neckties, cups and saucers, find Margaret at work over easel and palette.

Persons who climbed up the narrow stairs to the tower room last December 7 must have looked down on a Cairo not too different from Maud's own. Landmarks haven't changed so much. It's just that the spaces between them have grown up.

THE END

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